

WASHINGTON, DC-Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement in response to an executive order issued by President Bush that removed collective bargaining rights for 1,500 federal employees of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in the Justice Department and the Tax and Trade Bureau in the Treasury Department.

"The 1,500 positions affected by this new executive order have been represented by a collective bargaining unit for over 30 years. If, as the Administration asserts, that activity conflicts with their national security responsibilities, these employees deserve to know how.

"Without reasonable justification, the unprecedented action to strip away those rights amounts to a power grab by the executive branch to undermine the rights of federal employees and workers throughout the country.

"Federal employees work every day in service to our country and deserve better. We will be looking closely at the full impact of this order and any others that follow in the final days of this Administration. Any attempts to unjustly diminish rights or benefits will be met with firm opposition."

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